JUNE 1987

Equity Matters

University of Toronto

Status of Women Office / Office of the President

A Conversation with Ursula Franklin

Ursula Franklin is a Professor of Metallurgy and Materials Science in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering. In 1984 she became the first woman to receive the title of University Professor, the U of T's highest honour for a member of the faculty. A noted scientist, teacher, feminist, and peace activist, Dr. Franklin is keenly interested in the social impact of technology.

Q In your lecture, "The Second Scientist", you said that women approach problems differently than men do, that women are more concerned about context. Isn't it dangerous to emphasize the difference between the sexes when that difference has been a way of keeping women out of the sciences?

A I don't think it's at all dangerous to emphasize the difference between the genders. If you want to find out why women have been kept out, then you don't want to gloss over that difference, and women have been kept out because they are different. The point I try to make is that the University must recognize that women have something to give as women. I want them to get their jobs because of their being women, because they bring to the task things that men at this point in history don't.

Q What different things do women bring to the task?

A At the beginning of all scientific inquiry there is a question. Out of the historical experience of women, there are questions that women raise now that often have not been raised before. They come out of the sense of context I mentioned. It is because women raise different questions and because they may go about approaching them differently that women are needed in science and technology. If you think about what science, in spite of all its good contributions, has gotten the world into, it's high time that someone asks different questions and goes about resolving them differently.

Q What do you think the priorities in science should be? What should be studied?

A Science funding very often determines what is studied. I am a believer in basic science so that I would not think that anyone, including myself, has any notion of what to give priority support. My main point would be that one has to support scientists. Canada had the good sense in the past to support people; just as this University had, through the Connaught Fund, for a number of years given support for new staff. If they were good enough to begin a career as a lecturer, they would also get some money to begin the re-

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Scarborough votes for Childcare

The Committee for Daycare at Scarborough College has met with success. At a special meeting of the College Council on April 29, two motions were passed by a large majority to approve in principle the desirability of a childcare facility on the campus and to request that the Principal investigate the implementation of a childcare facility that falls within the Daycare Committee's general guidelines.

The Committee, which is an offshoot of the College's Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women, has prepared a detailed brief covering such matters as level of need, services, possible sites, operation and possible teaching and research implications. There has been discussion with Principal Williams and other representatives of the College administration, and the next steps include inspection by the Ministry of Community and Social Services of the sites under consideration.

Status Quote

"Dr. _____ is an emotionally stable, highly motivated and hardworking individual with a good background in her area."

(Excerpt from a letter received in support of a candidate for an academic position at U of T. It is comforting to know that she may be able to take her place with male colleagues whose emotional stability is not an issue.)

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search that they really wanted to do. Then they could show what they could do and enter into the broader grants competition. I still think that with care and refining, this is the best system to support science. Frequently true advances come out of left field, from some area nobody had considered particularly important. Unfortunately, public policy has changed so much that support is given less and less to people and more and more to projects.

Now it matters what is being researched compared to who is doing it. This approach has a significant steering effect. I consider this a very poor policy. Once something dawns in Ottawa that there is a problem, it's likely ten years too late to do research on the subject. The steering that we now see in science and even more so in the application of science suggests that some research areas are "better" or more urgent than others. I think that everyone, but particularly women, want the system much more open to a broad approach and would benefit from it. The universities ought to resist the directed research that decides a priori A is more important than B. We aren't God, we don't know what really will happen.

Q Is it more exciting for a beginning scientist now than it was twenty or thirty years ago?

A It is much more precarious now and, in a sense, much less exciting because you can't think about science, you have to think about survival. I think that it's very difficult to be a young scientist today, especially to be a broadly based scholar, for the excitement of scholarship is totally crowded out by the survival questions. If you aren't in a mainstream discipline that is in fashion right now, then you can't even think about doing research. What troubles me about directed research is that it has such an impact on what people do not think about: so much thought is just discarded before it's even formulated. Every problem is looked upon, not whether it is intrinsically a challenge but whether or not it can be funded. Scientific knowledge just doesn't advance like that. I am very concerned that the University uses its own resources to encourage those things that are not fundable from other sources. University funds must not augment the fashion of the day, but encourage alternatives to the popular trends.

Q Is there anything special that you think university science programs should do in terms of training?

A I think university science programs have to prepare students, whether they are men or women, as well as possible for all the challenges that their jobs may bring. That means if you accept the fact that women, once trained, might take a broader view of their fields, then the very restrictiveness of certain research and teaching programs makes it more difficult for those who are interested, for instance, in the social aspect of science than for those who are interested in the narrow and purely operational aspects. The general need for both men and women to see science put in context is very great indeed. If this need isn't filled through broadly based scholarship, the women will be hurt more than the men.

Q There has been a fairly steady increase in the number of women enrolled in science programs. What happens when these women graduate?

A It is very difficult to say globally, but I think it is for us quite apparent that there is not a proportional increase of women in graduate school. Most of my good women graduates go into industry. I see with some regret that not enough able young women to-day go on to graduate school. I am concerned about the succession, about the fact that we need women to teach science and engineering, and we need them now.

Q Is the non-academic world a more hospitable one than the academic?

A Yes. It is remarkable how much easier it is now for women students to get summer jobs in industry. This was a real difficulty in engineering ten years ago. Now women frequently get job offers first. When you look at our own statistics - say, you look at the program at a Convocation, you see a number of women getting the top medals and the top honours. There have been years when there were less than ten percent of women graduates in our faculty and they won a disproportionately large share of the top honours. Slowly that perks through into industry and into government, so that it is no longer as difficult as it used to be for competent women to find jobs.

Q Other than making careers in science themselves, what ways are there for women to influence the direction that science takes?

A That, I would think, is not a case of gender. All citizens have to take cognizance of the direction that science takes. Science is funded publicly and the constructive use of science, I think, is not something that should only concern women. This questioning of policies is what one has to do as a citizen. For instance, by asking why does Canada spend $800 million on the Space Station when there might be some very much more important things to do with these funds. This is not a gender-related problem. It is what men and women have to do with a real sense of urgency.

(Dr. Franklin's talk entitled "The Second Scientist" appeared in a Supplement to The Canadian Forum, December 1985.)

Women's Studies Collection

In January 1984, New College, which administers the Women's Studies Programme, designated in the college library a Women's Studies Collection specifically designed to provide course and research support for students.

The collection of approximately 5000 items has become an important educational resource, providing primary and secondary research materials on the intellectual, social, cultural, and political achievements of women. It includes books, documents, periodicals, briefs, reports, statistics, an in-house periodical index, a vertical file, and a specialized bibliography. Many of the items provide the kind of information not readily available in regularly published sources.

Especially useful are the position papers of Canadian special interest groups such as the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the various provincial status of women committees across Canada. The library also strives to maintain access to materials produced by other groups like the R.E.A.L. Women of Canada, the Equal Pay Coalition, and the National Association of Women and the Law. Of its nearly 120 periodical titles from all over the world including third world countries, nearly 80 percent are unique in the U of T.

In a recent Faculty of Arts and Science review of the Women's Studies Programme, the library was singled out for special praise. Since it opened, the collection has experienced a dramatic 300 percent increase in use by students both within and outside the Women's Studies Programme, and has been able to provide visiting scholars from other universities with useful materials.

With rising book and periodical prices, and a non-expanding budget, the library has, like most other segments of the university, been under significant financial constraints affecting both collection development and hours of service. Although these problems will continue, the Central Library System has demonstrated its support by assuming financial responsi-

bility for listing the collection in the new on-line catalogue scheduled for fall 1987.

The Women's Collection, though, has been extremely fortunate in the very generous support it has received from a variety of sources. Donations of retrospective materials have come from individuals and from local women's special interest groups, particularly the Healthsharing Collective and the Canadian Women's Movement Archives. In addition, the McLean Foundation has donated, in the last year, $7000 in support of new course materials focusing on women in the third world. The Province's University Excellence Fund has also provided assistance. Other donations have been made by staff, alumni, and private individuals through the University's Update and Varsity Funds.

In addition, the library has been most fortunate in receiving a truly generous, anonymous donation of $50,000. This outstanding contribution is being used for both retrospective and current purchases, and has enabled the library to provide both books and periodicals for new courses which as recently as last year could not have been taught. Special areas of development include feminist theory, political and social history, and special topics in women's health, civil rights, employment, minority women's issues, and literary studies. One of the most gratifying effects of this particular donation is a very healthy 34 per-

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Women's Centre is Active

The Women's Centre is sponsoring a Summer Discussion Series, which began on May 28 and will continue every second Thursday at noon. Discussion groups meet on the lawn in front of Hart House on sunny days, or at 49 St. George in the event of rain. Topics include women and racism, non-sexist parenting (June 28, July 9) and women and religion (July 23, August 6).

The Centre has received approval for government grants which will provide funding for three positions until December 1987. In addition to coordinating and training volunteers, the new staff will as one of their major projects conduct a survey of the needs of women at U of T.

Women's Centre at U. of T.

The Women's Centre newsletter, "That Time of the Month", is published as time and funds permit. It lists campus events for women and is a source of information on the many groups which serve women at U of T. The submissions deadline is the last working day of each month. The newsletter can be mailed free of charge to campus addresses or for $5.00 off-campus. Donations toward the costs of newsletter production are more than welcome.

The Women's Centre is located at 49 St. George Street, telephone 978-8201. Summer hours: Monday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Monday and Wednesday evenings, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Collective meetings (open to all women) are held every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. at the Centre.

Kudos

Congratulations to Professors Ursula Franklin and Rose Sheinin, who received honorary degrees this spring, Ursula from Simon Fraser and Rose from Acadia.

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cent increase in the circulation of women's books during the past academic year.

Senior alumni from Alumni Talent Unlimited have also helped significantly. The vertical file, in particular, would be virtually non-existent without the assistance of Mrs. Eva Sclater. Retired librarian, Ms Mary Ash, also deserves special mention for donating her professional skills doing the ground work necessary in setting up the early stages of the Women's Studies Bibliography.

* * *

The Women's Studies Programme is embarking on a special fund-raising campaign designed "...to put you on the shelf". Using a specially designed hasty note and personal networks, individuals are encouraged to support increasing student needs by contributing $25.00 (tax-deductible) towards a new book purchase which will bear the donor's name on a specially designed bookplate. Although the Women's Studies fund-raising campaign has re-couped its costs, it desperately needs fresh, energetic assistance to continue its campaign. Anyone interested in helping out should call Jeanne Guillaume, Librarian (978-2493); Mary Nyquist, Coordinator (978-4671); or Doris Page, Women's Studies Secretary (978-5404).

* * *

The library is located at 20 Willcocks Street, Wilson Hall, New College, and is open to all university students. Summer hours (until August 6): Monday and Wednesday: 6 p.m. - 10:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday: 6 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Wage Gap "Dramatic and Persistent"

According to recently-released Statistics Canada figures, the average full-time earnings of Canadian women continue to be significantly lower than those of men.

In the Province of Ontario between 1979 and 1985, female incomes averaged in the range of 62.2% to 64.2% of male incomes.

Reporting on these data, Pay Equity Bulletin, a publication of the Ontario Women's Directorate, observes:

"What is important about all these figures is the dramatic and persistent shortfall in women's wages as compared to men's. The persistence of the wage gap tends to contradict those who argue that the opening up of new opportunities to women will automatically eliminate systemic, gender-based discrimination in the level of wages, making pay equity legislation unnecessary."

Late News!

Professor Ursula Franklin has received the 1987 Elsie Gregory MacGill Memorial Award for the person who has made an "exceptional contribution in the fields of education, science, technology, or relief of poverty by which the public benefit was or will be served".

Equity Matters

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Please distribute to:

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